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ARMY PEACEKEEPERS: Warriors with Special Skills

LTC Mark W. Perrin
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PROFESSOR
Col Robert "Bullet" Eskridge, USAF

ADVISOR
COL Daniel Burghart, USA

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"Peacekeeping is not a job for soldiers, but only a soldier can do it."

Former UN Secretary-General Dag Hammerskold

"We are now concerned with the peace of the entire world. And the peace can only be maintained by the strong."

Forner U.S. Secretary of State George Catlett Marshall

Introduction. The Duke of Wellington is reputed to have claimed, "Great countries don't fight small wars."[1] However, great countries don't become great, and stay great, without maintaining presence, engagement, and the ability to protect its interests both at home and abroad in times of peace, crisis, and war. For the United States, the mission of presence, engagement, and defense abroad has largely been assigned to the armed forces. It is the demonstrated and proven strategic reach of the U.S. military in supporting diplomatic engagement, protecting global economic presence, and fighting and winning our nation's wars that maintains the superpower status of the United States today. But, as developing nations attempt to define their role in the new balance of world power, and as ethnic, religious, and tribal conflicts continue to flare, the United States, as a world leader, must now, more than ever, remain engaged in regional "small wars" and peace operations to promote democratic stability, enhance economic development, protect U.S. interests, and prevent major regional conflict.

Purpose of the Essay. The purpose of this paper is to address the changing environment, warfighting challenges, and a potential solution for a mission of U.S. military engagement that is likely to remain an international trend in the 21st century: Peace Operations. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the number of Army deployments has grown by over 300 percent, while the Army's active and reserve forces have been reduced by over 40 percent.[2] As of March 2001, the Army had 34,310 soldiers deployed

from the United States in 70 locations, and another 123,048 soldiers permanently forward stationed in 112 countries, resulting in almost one-third of the Army abroad conducting military operations other than war, including peace operations.[3] In the past decade, the United Nations and NATO essentially coerced the U.S into leadership roles in several peace operations because other nations were either not able or prepared to provide the military resources necessary to cope with the challenges of a Somalia, Bosnia, or Kosovo, and inaction was internationally unacceptable.[4] Dramatically, it was during the deployment of combat units to Bosnia and Kosovo in 1999, that the U.S. Army reported that two of its 10 combat divisions were unable to perform their wartime mission without serious delays for retraining.[5] After intense Pentagon and Congressional review, many senior U.S. military and civilian leaders now believe the United States should not allow its military forces to be drawn into small wars and peace operations missions that historically can last for years, illustrated by former President Clinton's initial-year promise of "home by Christmas" being proven wrong five times by continuous deployments of troops to Bosnia.[6] Those same senior leaders, however, pragmatically admit that a strong presence overseas is vital if the U.S. wants to remain a superpower.[7] Accordingly, President Bush and his national security team have pledged to take a hard, critical look at military deployments abroad, particularly those that send U.S. combat troops on extended peace operations missions in the Balkans.[8] The U.S. military's growing role in peace missions raises two major concerns, (1) how well prepared are U.S. forces to participate in peace operations and the changing character of conflict, and (2) how does that participation affect their ability to fulfill their primary mission of waging conventional war?[9]

The Changing Character of Conflict. The character of conflict has fundamentally changed since the fall of the Soviet Union, challenging both the focus and skills required for future warfighting. Wars or major regional conflict, most recently demonstrated by Desert Storm, used to be fought by large nations, with professional armies, for ideological reasons, against inter-state rivals, using sophisticated weapons, resulting primarily in military casualties and the taking of large portions of territory. In the past decade, however, war and regional conflict has been dominated by small, newly-independent or developing nations, fighting small-scale intrastate conflicts, with unprofessional militias, for cultural or ethnic reasons, using simple but lethal weapons, resulting primarily in civilian casualties due to ethnic cleansing (or other violations of human rights), in order to reclaim or acquire territory.[10] Without the influence of a stabilizing force in these developing regions, there is no reason to believe the trends in conflict will change. In fact, intelligence estimates indicate the global exploitation of information technology will only result in greater worldwide awareness of economic disparity and raise social expectations, increasing competition for scarce resources and resulting in large-scale migration of populations. At the same time, global economies are becoming more interdependent, proliferating and exploiting advanced technologies, eroding the geographic boundaries and influence of the nation-state, and ultimately resulting in more intrastate and less inter-state conflict.[11] The spillover effects of intrastate conflict will inevitably result in regional and inter-state tension. Therefore, the necessity for U.S. and international involvement in peace operations will continue to be a requirement in the future. But, what are the challenges of peace operations and how do they differ from conventional warfighting?

Peace Operations Differ from Conventional Warfighting. Peace Operations are a subset of a larger spectrum of military missions known as Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) that also include combating terrorism, humanitarian assistance, noncombatant evacuation operations, and military support to counterdrug operations. Joint Pub 3-07.3 states that peace operations are military operations to support diplomatic efforts to reach a long-term political settlement. As such, peace operations consist of three primary activities: support to preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement.[12] *Support to preventive diplomacy* includes actions taken in advance of a predictable crisis to prevent or limit violence. It may include simple military presence as a deterrent influence, or active participation in the negotiation or mediation of a peace settlement that resolves issues leading to conflict. *Peacekeeping Operations* are military operations undertaken with the consent of all major parties to a dispute, designed to monitor and facilitate implementation of an agreement and support diplomatic efforts to reach a long-term political settlement.[13] And, *Peace Enforcement Operations* are the application of military force or threat of its use, normally pursuant to international authorization, to compel compliance with resolutions or sanctions designed to maintain or restore peace and order.[14] Simply stated, peacekeeping takes place in a permissive environment, whereas peace enforcement is conducted in a non-permissive environment. The dilemma for peace operators is that the permissive environment may rapidly turn non-permissive resulting in escalation to use of force, therefore, combat trained and equipped personnel are the preferred option. But, the most critical factors that shape the peace operations environment are consent, impartiality, restrained use of force, and the primacy of political objectives, all vital in supporting the short-term objective of restoring security and stability to facilitate transition of the situation back to civil authority.[15]

In war, consent is not an issue of concern for a military commander. In peace operations, however, the level of consent determines the fundamentals of the operation. During peace operations, the conflict situation itself becomes the enemy, not the belligerent factions. Impartiality provides legitimacy to the effort. Settlement of the dispute, not victory, is the long-term objective, and the measure of success is political, not military. Force must be restrained, but when military force is used, however, its purpose must be to protect life or compel belligerents to comply with mandates or agreements, not to destroy.[16] This view of conflict is contradictory with the *Warrior Ethos* ingrained in U.S. Army soldiers to *close with and destroy the enemy*. Additionally, peace operations have different operating principles than traditional combat missions. They often lack clear strategic direction, rely on limited intelligence, employ constrictive rules of engagement, are set in primarily built-up or urban areas, depend on small and independent unit operations, are media intensive, and require close coordination with psychological operations and civil affairs units, as well as private volunteer (PVO), non-governmental (NGO), and international humanitarian organizations (IO).[17] Moreover, individual soldiers must understand that they can encounter situations where the decisions they make at the tactical level may have immediate strategic and political implications. Therefore, all personnel conducting peace operations must be keenly aware of the nation's history, economy, culture, primary irritants, and the way the society views American presence. Failure to fully understand the mission and the operational environment can quickly lead to incidents and misunderstandings that will ultimately impact U.S. legitimacy, reduce consent, and potentially result in actions that mar overall political objectives.[18] Commanders who have participated in recent peace operations unanimously agree, "Additional skills are required for today's types of military missions. To

succeed, the Army must train soldiers, commanders, and staffs to cope with the differences between these missions and traditional combat operations."[19]

What Does It Take and How Are We Training For Peace Operations Now? Although there are differences between peace operations and traditional combat, there remains the potential for escalation, combat, and loss of life in both. Therefore, deploying soldiers and units must be proficient in individual and collective combat skills before turning to the special skills required for effective peace operations. Basic individual combat skills must include but are not limited to weapons proficiency, reconnaissance and surveillance, accurate situation reporting, reacting to contact, crossing danger areas, reacting to sniper attack, force protection, and mine awareness.[20] Similarly, collective combat tasks must include tactical maneuver, building search and clearing, employing a quick reaction force, establishing blocking positions, and evacuation and treatment of casualties.[21] These individual and collective skills are sufficient to perform traditional combat missions, but effective peace operations require proficiency in additional special skills, including recognition and enforcement of human rights, operating check points, performing impartial negotiation and mediation, disarming hostile parties, managing dislocated civilian movement, coordination with local civilian authorities, maintaining public order, and effectively interacting with the ever-present media.[22] The most important training, however, is leader development; altering the leaders decision-making frame of reference from war to peacekeeping with primacy of effort on saving lives and easing human suffering through support of and coordination with humanitarian organizations and civil authorities.[23]

Initial U.S. Army peace operations brigades in Bosnia were deployed from combat divisions in Germany with a complement of their heavy combat vehicles and close enough to home bases to be able to respond to a major regional conflict, if required. But, as time

progressed, the rotational operations tempo required deployment assistance from combat divisions stationed in the United States. Because senior military leadership viewed peace operations as a distracter to warfighting training, the Army's training philosophy for peace operations became "just enough and just in time."[24] Although the Army has a centralized pre-deployment evaluation and certification process for deploying peace operations units, it does not have a standardized training program. Instead, deploying brigades are provided after action reports and lessons learned from previous unit deployments as well as standardized evaluation criteria as early as one year prior to their own deployment. Unit commanders then supplement their warfighting Mission Essential Task List (METL) with peace operations training requirements and prepare for the formal Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRE) at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, Louisiana, within one month of deployment.[25] MRE train-up uses Political-Military-Civil Seminars to augment commander and staff deployment training. The seminars expose deploying personnel to subject matter experts from various disciplines, including former ambassadors, political officers, former military commanders, security and international law enforcement personnel, the United Nations, and the State Department.[26]

During the two-week MRE, the deploying Brigade is evaluated from individual soldier through unit commander by experienced observer-controllers (OC) as deploying units encounter multiple, and often simultaneous, situations that they can expect to face during deployed peace operations. Each scenario takes place in a realistic setting with contract-actors playing the roles of belligerent parties, refugees, and civilian humanitarian organizations. This is often the first exposure junior soldiers and leaders get to the unique challenges of dealing with the constant civilian contact during peace operations. At the end of each situational training exercise (STX), the OC's conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the deploying unit's performance. Areas of

unsatisfactory performance are scrutinized in detail and integrated into the next series of situations to reinforce lessons learned and offer an additional opportunity to face that type of situation again. By the end of the two-week MRE, the deploying brigade and subordinate units are certified to conduct combat and peace operations tasks the Army determines are the most likely to occur during the deployment.

Peace Operations Benefit Some Units, But Not All. Army commanders returning from the Balkans state that combat units at the platoon and company level demonstrate "overwhelming" improvement in their wartime skills while deployed on peace operations. Their experience in a complex, challenging, and risky environment instills confidence, teaches them to work together, and fosters unit cohesion, which is invaluable to increasing overall unit readiness.[27] All small unit missions involve issuing orders, threat analysis, planning routes and communications, preparing for contingencies, conducting rehearsals, and mission execution. The greatest improvement in wartime skill above the company level, however, occurs in combat support and combat service support units. Military police, intelligence, civil affairs, engineer, psychological operations, aviation, supply and transportation, maintenance, and signal units all demonstrate significant improvements in mission essential warfighting skills during peace operations deployments. In fact, one commander described it as an "engineer playground," providing engineers the opportunity to handle live mines, remove unexploded ordnance, erect and destroy buildings and fortifications, clear battle damage with demolitions, and maintain open routes for NATO forces.[28]

Admittedly, however, the warfighting skills of battalion-level armor, infantry, artillery, and attack aviation units and personnel deteriorate during peace operations, as they are often deployed without their combat weapon systems or simulators. Due to the lack of their

equipment, firing ranges, and maneuver training areas, these combat fire-power units cannot train the perishable skills of gunnery, large unit maneuver, or battlefield synchronization--the only way to maintain combat readiness.[29] Further, since the Army opts to rotate division responsibility for each Bosnia and Kosovo deployment, peace operations actually affect the combat readiness of three divisions simultaneously for each rotation, with one brigade in train-up for the deployment, one brigade executing the deployment, and one brigade redeploying and retraining for its wartime mission. A recent Government Accounting Office Report (GAO) on peace operations highlighted senior leadership concerns that (1) extended participation in multiple or large-scale peace operations could impede the Services ability to respond in a timely to manner to major regional conflicts, (2) deploying units from a peace operation to a major regional conflict is more difficult than estimated due to required resupply and retraining, (3) high demand-low density (HDLD) specialized units are being deployed to consecutive peace operations, increasing operations and personnel tempo, (4) more National Guard and Reserve forces should be integrated, and (5) the U.S. needs to reassess the amount of risk it is willing to accept in rapidly responding to a potential major regional conflict if it intends to continue participating in sizeable, simultaneous peace operations.[30]

Army Transformation Provides the Opportunity For Building a Peace Operations Division. As the Army transforms into a lighter, faster, more lethal, more survivable, more rapidly deployable force, the transformation period offers the ideal time for the Army to consider forming a Peace Operations Division, complemented by the Interim Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) concept of common-chassis light armored wheeled vehicles. From a major regional conflict perspective, the Army's 10th Mountain Division is the best candidate for forming a peace operations division. This allows the Army to maintain heavy divisions forward-stationed in

Germany and Korea; retention of the XVIII Airborne Corps with the 82nd Airborne Division, the 101st Air Assault Division, and the 3rd Infantry Division as rapid deployment forces; and not touch the 1st Cavalry Division and 4th Infantry Division in 3rd Corps as the Army's heavy counter attack force.

How Would A Peace Operations Division Look? The peace operations division would be similar in structure to the current 10th Mountain Division, but designed with five deployable brigade-level headquarters to facilitate two simultaneous peace operations, if required. The division would consist of two active duty infantry brigades and one reserve component infantry brigade of three infantry battalions each, with habitual support from other brigades and battalions in the division, able to operate as independent Brigade Peace Operations Task Forces. The Division Artillery headquarters becomes the fourth deployable brigade-sized headquarters and provides a direct support artillery battalion to each infantry brigade. The Aviation Brigade becomes the fifth deployable brigade-sized headquarters and provides medium lift, reconnaissance, and attack aviation support to each infantry brigade. The Division Support Command provides a direct support battalion to each infantry brigade that includes maintenance, supply, transportation, medical, and chemical decontamination support. Similarly, each of the combat support battalions would provide a company to each infantry brigade including military police, signal, and engineer support. Since the peace operations division is not designed to deploy and operate as a division, General Support units including the Division Main Support Battalion, MLRS Company, and the Air Defense Battalion would be deactivated with air defense assets absorbed directly into the infantry brigades.

The biggest change in standard division organization occurs in the Division Headquarters. Although G1-G6 functions remain the same, the G3 and G5 receive major force structure

additions, resourced from deactivated general support units. The G3-Operations Staff would receive additional personnel in order to form a Division Augmentation Cell for each deploying brigade headquarters to facilitate coordination between the deployed brigade, the in-country supported commander, and the division headquarters in the United States, and free the deployed brigade commander to focus on execution of peace operations. Additionally, the G3 would receive personnel to form Mobile Training and Evaluation Teams to provide oversight of and evaluate division peace operations training, as well as be capable of "training the trainers" in other combat divisions when the Army requires one of their brigades to conduct a peace operations deployment.

The most significant change in the division headquarters occurs in the G5-Civil Military Operations Staff with the permanent assignment of regional area experts, former political officers, and representatives from NGOs and PVOs to enhance the professional expertise of the division and provide deploying units routine exposure to organizations they will encounter during peace operations. NGO and PVO representation includes not only valuable situational awareness information of ongoing humanitarian operations and the security environment, but also provides expertise for the G3's mobile training and evaluation teams.

And finally, in stark contrast to current Army policy, personnel in the peace operations division would have the choice to remain with the division for long-term assignments, participating in multiple deployments and creating the foundation of peace operations experience. As always, they would become warriors first but, over time, would also become masters of the special skills required for peace operations.

Advantages and Disadvantages of a Peace Operations Division. Forming a peace operations division directly addresses senior military and civilian leadership concerns regarding

effective peace operations, Army readiness, and the ability to respond to major regional conflict by (1) freeing major combat divisions from peace operations requirements to focus on conventional deterrence and warfighting, (2) creating a trained, experienced peace operations headquarters and staff to reduce area experts from other commands being pulled to augment deploying units, (3) ensuring unique coordination, planning, and execution skills for peace operations are trained and evaluated by experienced units on a regular basis to become habitual and routine, (4) creating experienced, professional mobile training and evaluation teams to prepare units from combat divisions to conduct peace operations, if required, and (5) equipping the peace operations division with modernized IBCT equipment so it could easily provide combat brigade augmentation to a major regional conflict.

There are two primary disadvantages in forming a peace operations division. The first disadvantage is taking a current combat capable division and restructuring it so that it is impossible to operate as a division, and therefore, removing a combat division from the available forces list for a major regional conflict. And, the second disadvantage is simply personnel tempo. Soldiers assigned to peace operations units would inevitably deploy more frequently and potentially be susceptible to higher levels of personal and family strain as well as low morale in their initial assignment.

A Strategic Decision for the Bush Administration. Experience has shown that effective peace operations require a different mix of skills, equipment, and forces than conventional combat. Thus, a military designed for conventional war may have difficulty performing other missions on a continuing basis.[31] But, Presidential Decision Directive 25, Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations, which is still in effect, states the U.S. should participate in peace operations if they advance U.S. interests, its conclusion is tied to clear objectives and realistic

criteria, and the consequences of inaction are unacceptable.[32] Secretary of State Colin Powell is a leading opponent of using the military to solve diplomatic and humanitarian problems.[33] Other top political advisors to President Bush, however, say the U.S. and its allies must seriously consider creating professional peacekeeping forces to reduce the overall burden on U.S. troops.[34] Our National Security Strategy is founded on U.S. engagement and leadership abroad, increasing the probability of continuing military involvement in peace operations.[35] And, the bottom line is U.S. participation in peace operations is "an investment in the world."[36] But, the Army's primary purpose is to fight and win the two major regional conflicts that occur nearly simultaneously.[37] The Army faces significant trade-offs in capability and readiness as it tries to perform both missions. If frequent deployments for peace operations continue, the Army must face the risk of being less ready for conventional combat than it would be otherwise. If that level of risk is determined to be unacceptable, then the Bush administration faces the choice of (1) funding a larger military to provide the means to conduct peace operations and simultaneously respond to two MRCs, (2) reducing U.S. commitments to peace operations, or (3) restructuring the Army within resource constraints to create a professional peace operations division–Warriors with Special Skills. The choice is for President Bush to make…and only time will tell.

End Notes

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